



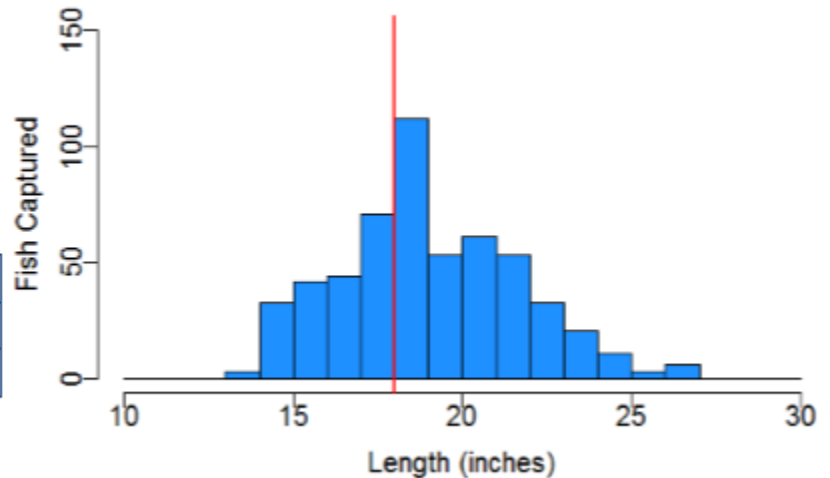
Spring Fisheries Survey Summary Whitefish Lake, Sawyer County, 2018

The Hayward DNR Fisheries Management Team conducted a fyke netting survey on Whitefish Lake from May 8-10, 2018 to assess the adult walleye, muskellunge, northern pike, yellow perch and black crappie populations in the lake. Six nets were set overnight for three total nights which resulted in 18 total net-nights of effort. An electrofishing survey conducted on May 24, 2018 documented the status of bluegill, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, and non-game species but also provided information on juvenile walleye. Four miles of shoreline were shocked. Quality, preferred, and memorable sizes referenced in this summary are based on standard proportions of world record lengths developed for each species by the American Fisheries Society.

Walleye (Adult)



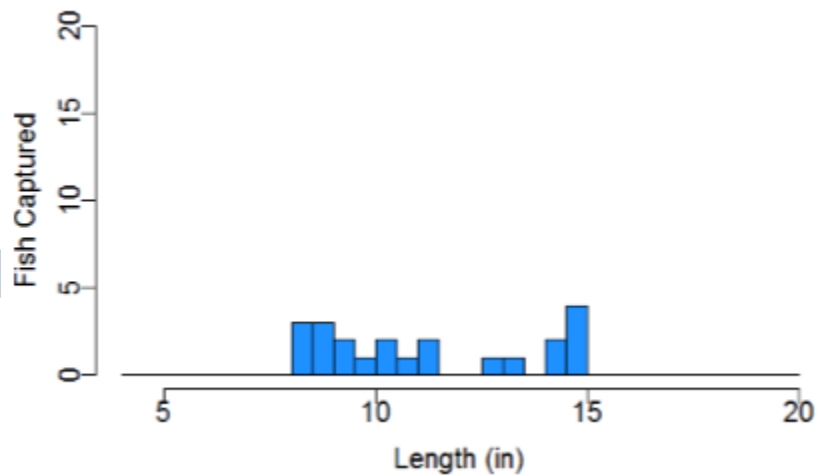
Captured 32 per net-night ≥ 10 inches	
Quality Size ≥ 15"	93%
Preferred Size ≥ 20"	34%



Walleye (Juvenile)



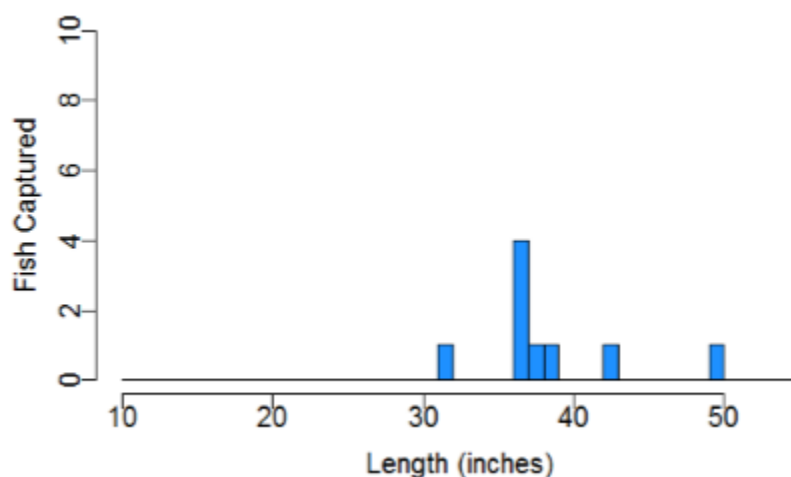
Captured 6 per mile ≤ 15 inches



Muskellunge



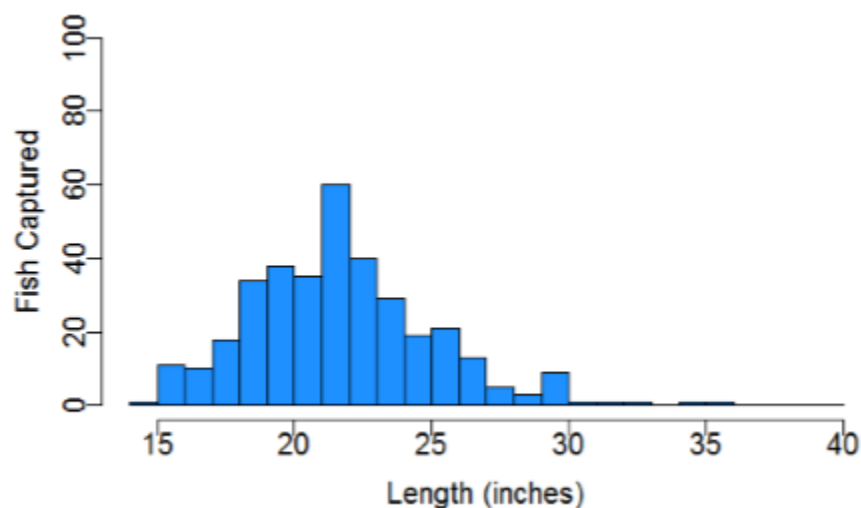
Captured 0.5 per net-night ≥ 20 inches	
Quality Size ≥ 30 "	100%
Memorable Size ≥ 42 "	22%



Northern Pike



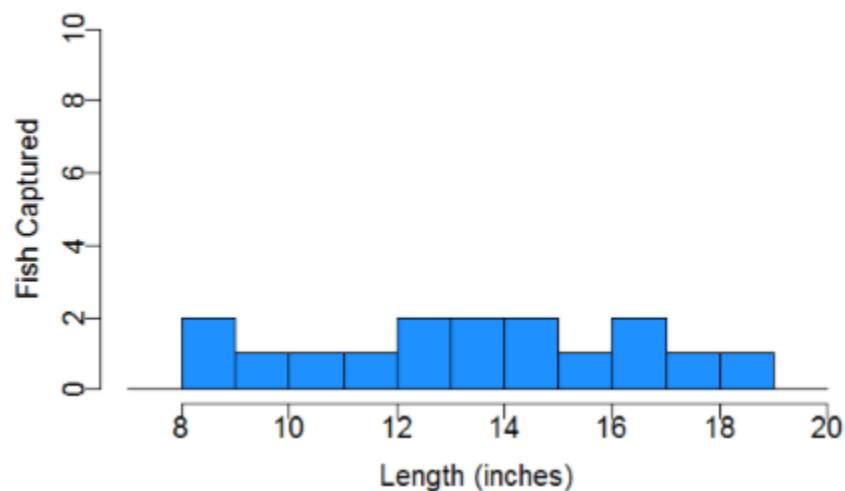
Captured 21 per net-night ≥ 14 inches	
Quality Size ≥ 21 "	58%
Preferred Size ≥ 28 "	5%



Smallmouth bass



Captured 4 per mile ≥ 7 inches	
Quality Size ≥ 11 "	75%
Preferred Size ≥ 14 "	44%
Memorable Size ≥ 17 "	12%



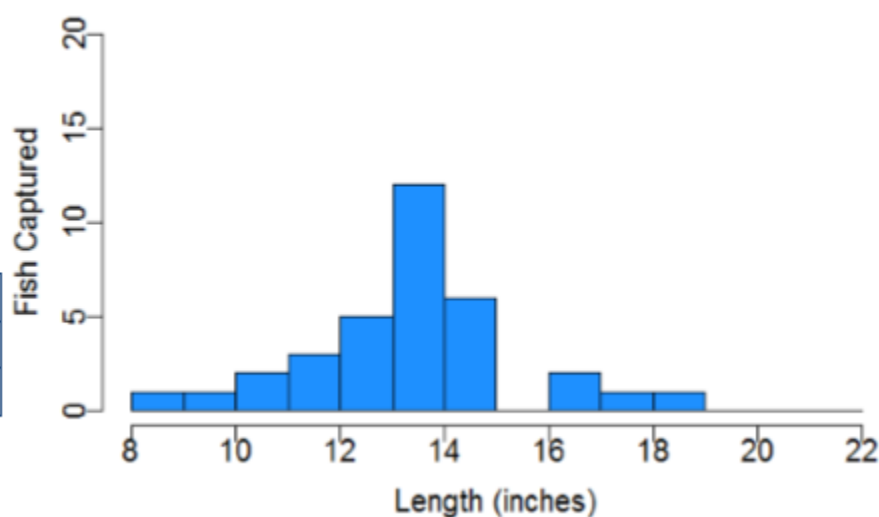
Largemouth bass



Captured 9 per mile \geq 8 inches

Quality Size \geq 12" 79%

Preferred Size \geq 15" 12%



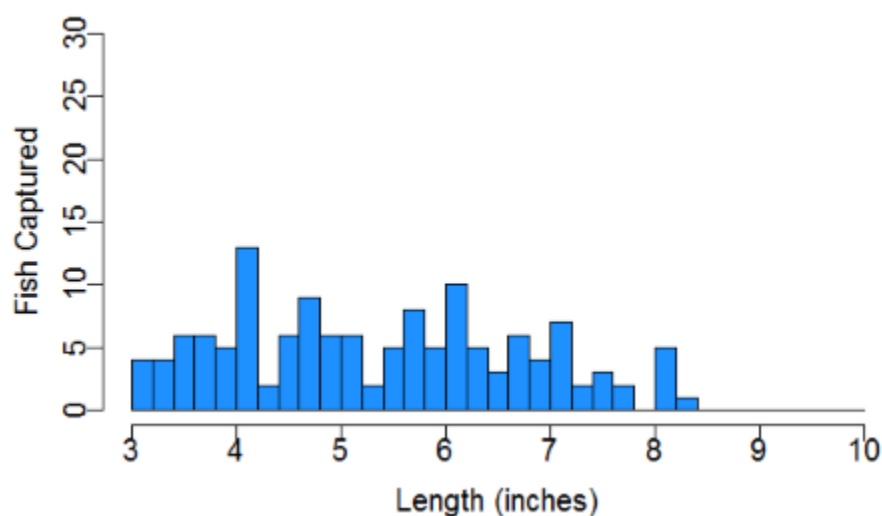
Bluegill



Captured 135 per mile \geq 3 inches

Quality Size \geq 6" 36%

Preferred Size \geq 8" 4%



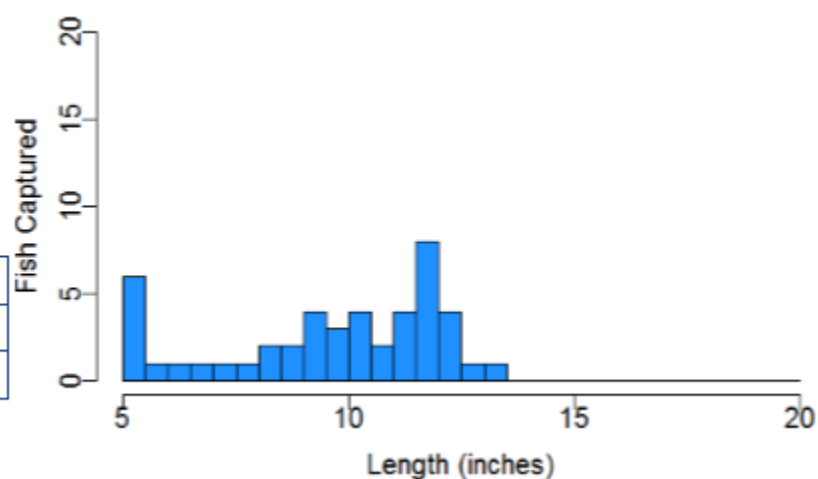
Black Crappie



Captured 3 per net-night \geq 5 inches

Quality Size \geq 8" 76%

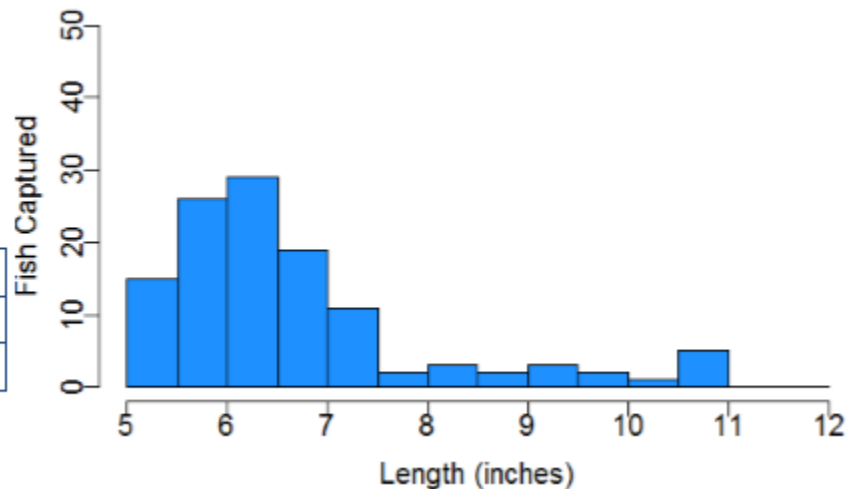
Preferred Size \geq 10" 52%



Yellow Perch



Captured 7 per net-night ≥ 5 inches	
Quality Size ≥ 8 "	14%
Preferred Size ≥ 10 "	5%



Summary of Results

The fyke netting portion of the 2018 survey was very well-timed to capture spawning walleye which were particularly congregated near the inflowing and outflowing creeks in Whitefish Lake. Walleye capture rate was high in comparison to other lakes in the area and to past surveys (18 per net night in 2013). Size was also impressive with 93% of all adult walleye over 15 inches. Whitefish Lake is currently managed with an 18-inch minimum length limit and many legal-sized fish (18"+) were captured. While walleye recruitment has been low in Whitefish Lake (see juvenile catch rates above), stocking appears to be providing enough of a boost to maintain a fairly healthy fishery. The forage base for walleye in Whitefish Lake is excellent with cisco, perch, sucker, and many minnow species present.

Muskellunge were captured at a low to moderate rate, but several large individuals were captured. This "low density-good size" status is characteristic of Whitefish Lake. In addition to a fish that was just shy of 50 inches (shown above) a 51.5-inch muskellunge was captured during the electrofishing portion of this survey. Whitefish Lake is stocked with muskellunge on an every third year rotation.

Northern pike were captured at a moderate to high rate. The average size of pike in Whitefish Lake is slightly higher than most other lakes in the area that have a similar relative abundance of pike. The better-than-expected size may be attributed to the high-quality forage base which includes ciscos.

Smallmouth bass capture rates were lower than expected. Crews conducting the survey felt that they were not effectively capturing smallmouth that were present in the vicinity of shallow spawning areas but had not committed to spawning yet. The smallmouth bass results in this survey should be taken with a grain of salt. Largemouth bass capture rates were largely similar to past surveys (11 per mile in 2013). While size generally remains poor, there are some indications of improvement. The percentage of largemouth over 15 inches increased from 2% in 2013 to 12% in 2018. The minimum length limit was removed for largemouth bass in 2014 to allow anglers the opportunity to harvest small largemouth bass. The minimum length limit for smallmouth bass was recently increased to 18 inches, and only one may be harvested per day.

Bluegill are moderately abundant and show improved size (36% over 6 inches) in comparison to the 2013 survey (16% over 6 inches). Black crappie are present at a low density but offer mostly quality-size fish. Size of crappie (52% over 10 inches) has also improved since 2013 (14% over 10 inches). Yellow perch were captured at a moderate to low abundance with mostly smaller fish and only a small percentage that would be of interest to anglers (5% over 10 inches).



Fisheries crews almost needed a second tub to hold all the walleye captured in some nets in Whitefish Lake. Photo by Max Wolter.

Report by Max Wolter – Fisheries Biologist, Sawyer County
Survey conducted by Max Wolter, Scott Braden, and Evan Sniadajewski (Fisheries Technician)
Special thanks to volunteers Dan Richards and Ethan Rossing
Reviewed and Approved by Jeff Kampa – Area Fisheries Supervisor